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FCC backs down in license controversy

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP and local reports) — The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) — in the face of massive public outcry that included the voices of two Mississippi Congressmen — has reversed a portion of a Dec. 29 ruling on what constitutes permissible programming under a noncommercial educational television broadcasting license.

The contested — and reversed — portion of the Dec. 29 ruling introduced a qualification that half of the programming of noncommercial educational licensees must "primarily serve an educational, instructional, or cultural purpose" in the station's community.

The required 50% could include some forms of "teaching of matters related to religion" such as "studying religious texts form a historical or literary perspective," according to the FCC ruling. It would exclude "programming primarily devoted to religious exhortation, proselytizing, or statements of personally-held religious views." Church services "generally will not qualify" under the standard, the original ruling stated.

In the reversal, the FCC said that while attempting to "clarify what constitutes non-commercial educational programming, we offered additional guidance broadly, and attempted to apply that guidance to specific cases involving religious programming. Regrettably, it has become clear that our actions have created less certainty rather than more, contrary to our intent.

"In hindsight, we see the difficulty of minting clear definitional parameters for 'educational, instructional, or cultural' programming, particularly without the benefit of broad comment. Therefore, we vacate our additional guidance. We will defer to the editorial judgment of the licensee unless such judgment is arbitrary or unreasonable."

A pair of Mississippi Congressmen were quick to respond to the FCC's original directive.

"I cannot begin to imagine what would happen if a federal agency, such as the FCC, was allowed to dictate what a religious broadcaster, privately owned, can show on their television station.

"This order is outrageous...," said Ronnie Shows, who represents the Fourth Congressional District of Mississippi in the

U.S. House of Representatives.

The first-term representative said he has received well over 100 letters from constituents concerned with the FCC order.

Shows alleged that the FCC action was taken while Congress was "safely out of session," and without the benefit of public comment.

Chip Pickering, Mississippi's third district Congressman, plans to co-sponsor a bill in the House that would nullify attempts to implement the "Additional Guidance" section of FCC Order 99-393, which contains the controversial action.

"This was arrogant overreach by the FCC. We cannot afford to let this ruling stand. There is no place for the government to place value on religious expression," Pickering said.

Constituents can contact their U.S. representatives and senators by calling the U.S. Capitol at (202) 224-3121 or by getting contact information via the Internet at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

The FCC's telephone number at its consumer center is (888) 225-5322; the agency's address is 445 12th St. S.W., Washington, DC 20554; and the e-mail address of FCC chairman William Kennard is bkenard@fcc.gov.

The original case involved Cornerstone Television, an independently owned FamilyNet affiliate operating under a commercial license in suburban, Pittsburgh, Pa. Cornerstone sought to acquire a non-commercial educational license in an exchange with a public television broadcaster in Pittsburgh which held two such licenses. The commercial license, in turn, then would have been sold to a subsidiary of Paxson Communications Corp.

"The FCC reversal on this critical First Amendment issue on Friday was the result of God's providential grace and the Christian community stand-

ing united for religious freedom," said Robert E. Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), of the 4-1 vote by FCC commissioners.

NAMB is charged with most of the broadcast responsibilities of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We rejoice with and are thankful for all those with whom we stood in this struggle against religious discrimination," Reccord said.

The North American Mission Board's FamilyNet subsidiary filed a "Petition for Reconsideration" less than two hours before the announcement of the reversal on Jan. 28. Others who joined in filing the petition included Channel 38 Christian Television, a FamilyNet affiliate in El Paso, Texas, and several church broadcast ministries — including those of two former SBC presidents, pastors Adrian Rogers and Ed Young, and two other leading pastors, James Merritt, and Ronnie Floyd.

Randy Singer, NAMB's executive vice president, called the reversal a "victory for the little guys — the noncommercial stations just trying to broadcast God's Word through television ministries reaching their communities.

"While this threat to religious liberty has now passed, it does not mean we can let down our guard," said Singer, a trial attorney who practiced communications law before coming to NAMB. "This entire incident should serve to remind us again that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

A Cornerstone spokesman told Baptist Press Jan. 31 that it will stand by an earlier decision to abandon the effort in the face of the FCC's ruling.

"We feel that when the FCC released the additional guidance on Dec. 29 that it revealed a lot about the disposition of the commissioners toward religious broadcasters on noncommercial channels. And because of that, we feel like the rules have now changed," said Mark Dreistadt, vice president of administration and finance for Cornerstone.

"We are thankful that the wording was rescinded, however we believe that just because the wording has been rescinded does not mean that their disposition has changed," he said.

Specifically, he said Cornerstone anticipated repeated challenges to future programming from The Alliance for Progressive Action, a group in Pittsburgh that opposed the license transfer.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

AAEO sets record

Mississippians appointed

Letters to the editor

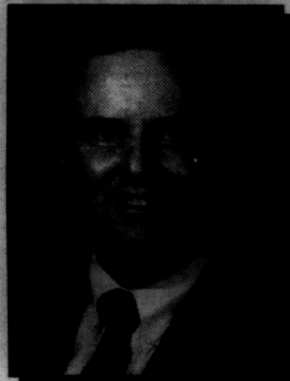
Sunday School lessons

Interim training at Garaywa



Leaders who provided training in conducting effective ministries in the local church at Patterson Place at Camp Garaywa on Jan. 18 were (from left) Argile Smith, J. D. Gray Professor of Preaching at New Orleans Seminary; James Carter, retired church-minister relations director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention; Matt Buckles, director of the Church Administration/Pastoral Ministries Department, of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB); Louis Smith, director of the MBCB Church-Minister Relations and Annuity Department; and David Lee, director of strategic planning for the Maryland/Delaware Baptist Convention. (Photo by Carl M. White)

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Facing up to a 'difficult moral issue'

Mike Pride is haunted still by the photograph, even though it's been three years since he first saw it.

"It was a picture of a mother's anguish as she laid her hands on the casket of her 17-year-old daughter," recalled the editor of the Concord (N.H.) Monitor, in an article for the February issue of the magazine Brill's Content.

"She seemed at once to need the support of the casket to keep from collapsing and to be pulling away from the daughter she could no longer touch. The woman's name was Ginger Blanchard. Her daughter's name was Brooke. Brooke died when the driver of the car she was riding in lost control at high speed. The driver was a juvenile so there was no public record of the boy's blood-alcohol level, but Blanchard believes he had been drinking," Pride said.

It was with the Blanchard family's tragedy in mind that Pride composed a piercing editorial when the newspaper discovered many athletes routinely violated Concord High School's ban on alcohol consumption by student athletes — often with their parents' indulgence.

As he braced for the critical onslaught that any editor expects after publishing a hard-hitting editorial, he was surprised by the community's reaction.

"We did not receive a single letter to the editor. I understood why. It's that code of silence. People are reluctant to speak openly about a difficult moral issue, especially when something as important to them as participation in school sports is at stake," Pride said.

"In a case like this, where the subject is taboo, this (newspaper's) responsibility is even greater. Besides, in our area — and, I suspect, in many communities across America — there is a haunting picture to remind people of what is at stake in this debate," Pride said.

How true. In Mississippi, there is plenty

of teen drinking. Therefore, there are plenty of haunting pictures and grieving families — and like New Hampshire, the subject is virtually off-limits because alcohol is such a "difficult moral issue."

If people died on amusement park rides at the rate teenagers are dying from alcohol abuse, there would be an outcry. If a packed football stadium collapsed and killed as many young people as alcohol, there would be action taken overnight.

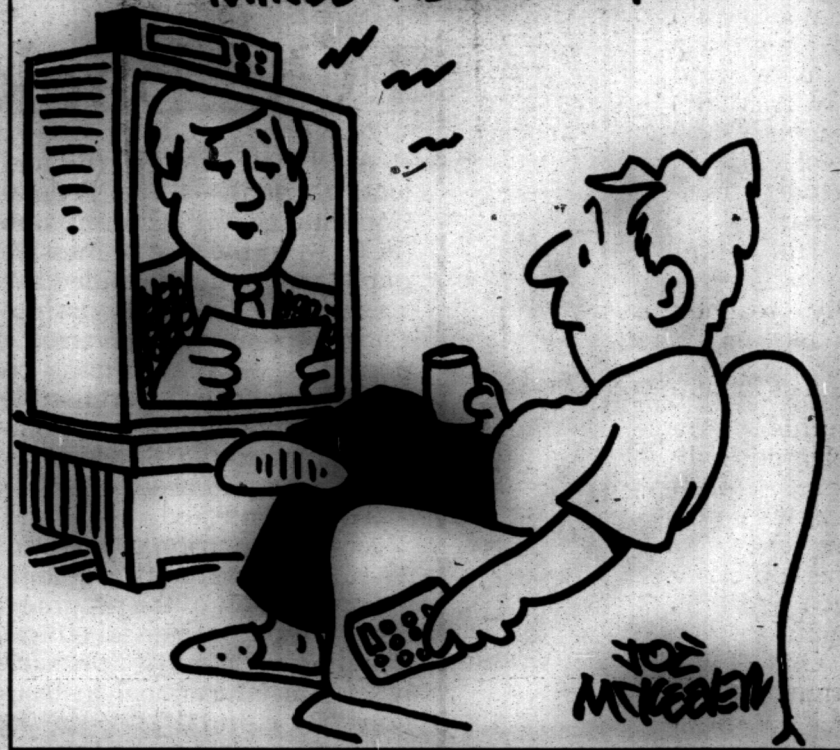
Why, then, is teen drinking such a "difficult moral issue?" The answer can be found in Pride's experience.

"The parents' reasoning goes like this: ...Being on the team is important to my kid's self-esteem. Suspension from the team is too high a price to pay, so let's not talk about it."

Parents who wink at teen drinking are setting themselves up for the deepest heartache they will ever know. Parents who drink at home, and who allow their children to drink at home, are familiarizing their children with a potent poison that over the course of their lifetime will take away more of their friends and loved ones than almost any other cause of death.

Parents, it's time we moved the subject of teen drinking from the realm of "diffi-

"IN TODAY'S NEWS, BELIEF IN HEAVEN ZOOMS WHILE CHURCH ATTENDANCE DROPS. T.V. VIEWING CLIMBS, WHILE EVERYONE WORRIES ABOUT IT. BOOK SALES INCREASE AND READERSHIP FALLS! SCHIZOPHRENIA? THE NATION IS OF TWO MINDS ABOUT IT!"

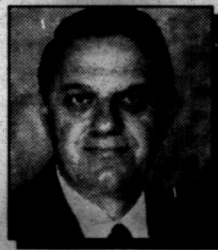


cult moral issue" to just plain "moral issue" and started talking about it — with our children, school officials, elected representatives, and fellow church members.

More importantly, it's time for each of us to stop merely talking the talk, and start walking the walk, when it comes to the subject of alcohol in our lives and homes.

One more dead daughter and grieving mother is one too many.

GUEST OPINION:



Pastors: watch those ethics!

By Archie Herrin, Director of Missions
Lawrence/Marion/Walthall Association

not be faithful in the small things, you will not be faithful in the large things.

Another matter has to do with interim pastors. I see a dangerous thing happening. Soon after arriving as interim, the pastor sets about campaigning for the position for which he has been called to serve as interim. I see several unethical practices in this situation.

First, the interim pastor usurps the authority of the pastor search committee, duly elected by the church to secure and make a recommendation to the church. People other than the pastor search committee become involved in doing what the church has instructed the pastor search committee to do.

What if the interim pastor or the pastor search committee feels that the interim pastor

should be considered as pastor? The interim pastor should be honest and tell the committee that he is interested. He should then resign immediately as interim. He should have his resume submitted to the committee by a friend. The committee would then consider him as any other candidate.

If the committee felt they should consider the interim as pastor, they should approach the interim. Again, if the interim was interested, he should resign immediately as interim. The committee would then consider him as any other candidate.

Secondly, the interim is not being honest. He knows if he can become interim, people will begin to build a relationship with him and it would be hard not to vote to call him as pastor. This can be very divi-

sive within the fellowship. I know that one's understanding of God's will can change, but he must be honest and of the highest integrity.

Thirdly, the interim is being divisive to the fellowship of the church. The pastor search committee cannot be responsive to all the people when a group of people is pushing for the interim. The group that pushes for the interim's election is also usurping the authority of the pastor search committee.

How can this problem be eliminated? The pastor search committee should have in writing an agreement with the interim pastor that he will not be considered as pastor. The interim should say to the church that he will not be considered as pastor. If he is approached, he should tell the person that he will not be considered. This frees the interim to do his work and the pastor search committee to do their work.

These steps can also be followed for any ministerial position in the church.

May pastor search committees — and pastors — always hold to the highest ethical values in dealing with each other.

God always honors what is right.

NAMB reaches Bold Mission Thrust goal

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — One of the most significant goals of the 1976 Bold Mission Thrust initiative was reached right on schedule this past year as the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) reached the level of 5,000 active missionaries.

The number was actually reached in November, but because missionary counts are released only once each year the count on Dec. 31 was officially recorded as 5,025.

One of the original goals of Bold Mission Thrust — a

comprehensive long-range plan for denominational growth — was that the number of home missionaries would reach 5,000 by the year 2000.

Of the total number of missionaries approved and appointed, 3,264 are missionaries and their spouses operating under various levels of cooperative funding with state con-

ventions and local associations. Another 1,761 are long-term volunteers with two or more

missionary force a "two edged sword. It is an exhilarating opportunity while at the same time being an overwhelming challenge," adding that credit for the achievement extends far beyond the agency.

"It takes everybody doing their part and working in cooperation to make it happen. That's the strength of Southern Baptists. I thank God for our partnership with our seminaries, state conventions, associations, and local churches to see this wonderful milestone reached," Reccord said.

"With the long-term impact of YouthLink 2000 — which resulted in thousands of commitments to missions service — I believe we will see an even further explosion in the missionary force of the future both in North America and around the world," Reccord added. "What a great time it is to be alive and on mission for the King!"

Bill Graham, manager of NAMB's missionary personnel unit, said much of the jump has been due to more dollars made available for missionary support because of efficiencies gained from the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1997.

NAMB was formed in 1997 from the former Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and Radio and Television Commission.

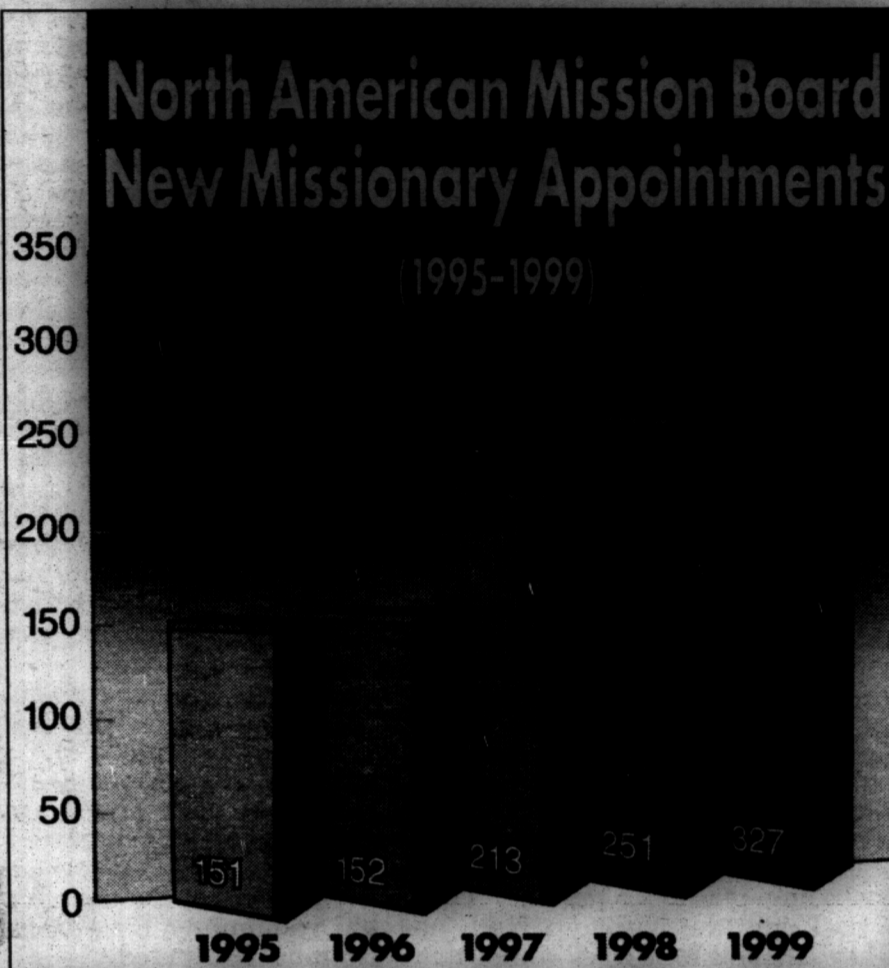
"The intent of the restructuring has been to put money forward in the field, and I think

we are seeing the results of that action," Graham said. "And the commitment that the agency is making is showing up in the numbers."

The rising number of missionaries also reflects a new priority on church planting at the agency, Graham said.

"Rather than talking about church planting as a process, the church-planting group is trying to set a climate for a church-planting movement — not just using appointed folks but developing lay leaders," Graham said. "We're seeing the first wave of folks rising to lead in that movement."

Much of the growth in missionary appointments has resulted from the Nehemiah Project — NAMB's new seminary-based system for training



years of service operating under the Mission Service Corps program.

The number of appointments for the year is also up sharply over the last few years, from 154 in 1996 under the former Home Mission Board to 327 in 1999.

Robert E. Reccord, NAMB's president, called the expanding

Alcohol: parents not concerned

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Alcohol-related deaths outnumber deaths from drug use 4-to-1, yet parents are less concerned about their teenagers using alcohol than drugs, according to a new study. While alcohol-related deaths vastly outnumber deaths from illicit drugs in America, 21% of parents fear their teenagers using drugs, while only 5% fear teenage abuse of alcohol, according to a report by the non-profit organization Drug Strategies.

That is due to effective public-awareness campaigns about the dangers of drugs, according to a report titled "Millennium Hangover: Keeping Score on Alcohol."

Drug Strategies, a Washington-based research group, said the media ought to give equal attention to alcohol abuse, which the report termed "America's most pervasive drug problem."

Though its ill consequences are less recognized, alcohol abuse is more widespread than abuse of illicit drugs, Drug Strategies said.

Of the nation's 113 million drinkers, 10 million are underage and 33 million "binge drink," or have more than five drinks at one time. An estimated 14 million Americans need treatment for alcohol problems, the report said.

Alcohol's consequences also cost society more money than drugs, the report continued. Estimated costs for alcohol abuse in America due to health problems, accidents, crime and "lost productivity" total \$107 billion annually.

Even though the costs of alcohol abuse to society are 50% greater than those of drug abuse, parents are not telling doctors about their alcohol abuse presents a pressing problem," the report said.

More federal money is allocated for research on illicit drugs than for research on alcohol. There is an Office of National Drug Control Policy, but there is no similar federal program for alcohol abuse.

The report calls alcohol the "drug of choice" among teens, used more than all illicit drugs combined.



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

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Looking back

10 years ago

The executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board approves the appointment of Anne McWilliams as the first female associate editor of The Baptist Record. McWilliams has been on the staff of the newsjournal of Mississippi Baptists since 1953.

20 years ago

James E. Woods, Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, resigns to rejoin the faculty of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Woods has headed the agency, which represents nine Baptist bodies with public policy issues, since 1972.

50 years ago

Mark Lowery accepts the pastorate of Wesson Church, Wesson, which he formerly pastored, having resigned in 1942 to serve as a chaplain. On his return to civilian life, Lowery pastored Cedar Grove Church near Columbia.

Suspicious mail alarms LifeWay, FBI

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Overreaction to a routine postal investigation brought Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Metropolitan Nashville (Tenn.) emergency personnel to the front entrance of LifeWay Christian Resources at noon on Jan. 13.

LifeWay had filed a telephoned report with the local U.S. Post Office on Jan. 13 after a suspicious-looking envelope with no return address was delivered to the Southern Baptist agency.

The contact was part of a LifeWay procedure established after the SBC Executive Committee was the victim of a mailed anthrax hoax last year.

Jim Shull, director of LifeWay's corporate services department, said, "LifeWay was attempting a safe disposition of the unopened letter."

He said a contact from someone at the U.S. Post Office to the FBI resulted in an unexpected visit to LifeWay not only from the FBI, but also local fire department and police personnel, and public news media.

"LifeWay's main entrance was secured for approximately 30 minutes by police until the FBI determined there was no emergency," Shull said. "After following routine procedures, emergency personnel and equipment were removed."

Shull said the unopened letter would be given to the post office for investigation. Normal procedure would not have brought local emergency personnel to LifeWay unless the situation had warranted such action, he added.

Clothing program suiting job applicants

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP) — For Debbe Jefcoat, coordinating the Suit Your Self ministry at Olive Church, Pensacola, Fla., is not just about providing women with clothing. It is an opportunity to help them find a life of hope and a future.

Suit Your Self began in 1996 at First United Methodist Church of Pensacola. Jane Holston, the coordinator there, contacted Olive Church with the prospect of beginning a similar ministry due to the tremendous need and Olive's convenient location. Suit Your Self North became a reality in April 1999. After only six months of service, 107 women have participated with a total of 35 outfits being distributed.

Suit Your Self is a program designed to outfit women with clothing appropriate for job interviews, and for working thereafter, free of charge.

The program currently serves approximately six women a week.

Word of mouth has been the best form of advertising for the ministry, Jefcoat noted, though announcements occasionally are run in the church newsletter and bulletin, as well as the local city newspaper.

Most of the women who are served are sent to Olive on a referral basis, though some women in need are served without referral.

"We work with about 15 different agencies," Jefcoat said. These agencies range from one that is primarily for women who

have recently been released from incarceration, a shelter for abused women, and a college campus that offers a Women in

tual. A record is kept of each person assisted, to enable the church to continue to minister to their needs.

The women also are responsible for bringing in proof of employment once they have been hired. At that time, Jefcoat provides them with at least five to six complete outfits that are suitable for their particular occupation.

"One lady we had helped came back for her outfits after being hired, during her lunch break. I fitted her with numerous outfits. She was so excited that she wore the clothes we gave her back to work instead of her own," Jefcoat said.

Suit Your Self is staffed by approximately 10 volunteers who work with Jefcoat, secretary of Olive Baptist's social services department.

Volunteers work a couple of hours every Monday afternoon sorting

clothes by size and season, organizing shoes and making displays in the Suit Your Self room.

Members of the church or people from the community have donated all of the clothing distributed.

"We take dress clothing that is appropriate for a job interview. We do keep some casual clothes on hand for women who will not have office jobs. Anything we can't use we turn over to another organization in our church called CARE Connection," Jefcoat said.

READY FOR WORK — Debbe Jefcoat (right), program coordinator for Suit Your Self, assists Shirley Pugh with a fitting. The program, run by Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, helps provide women with work-appropriate clothes. (BP photo by Janet Little Cooper)

Transition course.

"The women in transition specifically are women who have never worked and have for some reason or another been thrown back into the workforce with no skills. They take this four-week course that relates to them what is needed to enter the workplace and then are referred to us for a fitting," Jefcoat said.

An application must be completed by all participating women, which provides Olive with a basic assessment of the women's needs — both general and spiri-

'Smoke on the Mountain' takes unique Gospel tack

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (BP) — Mix the style of a Broadway musical with the story of a Saturday night gospel sing in a rural church and the result is the hit production "Smoke on the Mountain."

After a year-and-a-half Off-Broadway run in The Lamb's Theatre in New York, Smoke on the Mountain has been performed on about 250 stages across the nation — making it the second most performed play in regional theaters. The musical, set in a rural North Carolina Baptist church in 1938, was conceived/directed by Alan Bailey and written by Connie Ray, who played the lead character on the former sitcom, "The Torkelsons."

"When it played in New York, most of the audience had never been to a church like this," said Bailey, who grew up in Bradley Church near Macon, Ga., and now lives in Los Angeles. "One thing I've learned is that a guarantee of success in New York is to do something new or in a different way. They saw this as something new because they never had any experience with this setting."

"Whereas now, the primary appeal is to people most like the audience in that church would be."

Ruth Pollard, a member of

First Church, Lathrop, Mo., is one such person. She recently organized an outing for several church members to see Smoke on the Mountain at the New Theatre Restaurant in Overland Park, Kan.

"My dad was a fiddle player, and the music was reminiscent

of old times," Pollard said. "It's fun and wholesome."

Lisandro Gonzalez, pastor of the Missouri church, said the play appeals especially to senior adults. "They can remember this type of singing 40 and 50 years ago."

He added, "It's a very effective

way to present the gospel outside the four walls of the church."

Smoke on the Mountain centers around the Sanders family. The setting is a Saturday night gospel sing in Mount Pleasant Church in Mount Pleasant, N.C.

The Sanders family performs several bluegrass gospel songs during their first family singing in five years, including such standards as "I'll Fly Away" and "The Church in the Wildwood." Sprinkled throughout the musical is each family member's testimony.

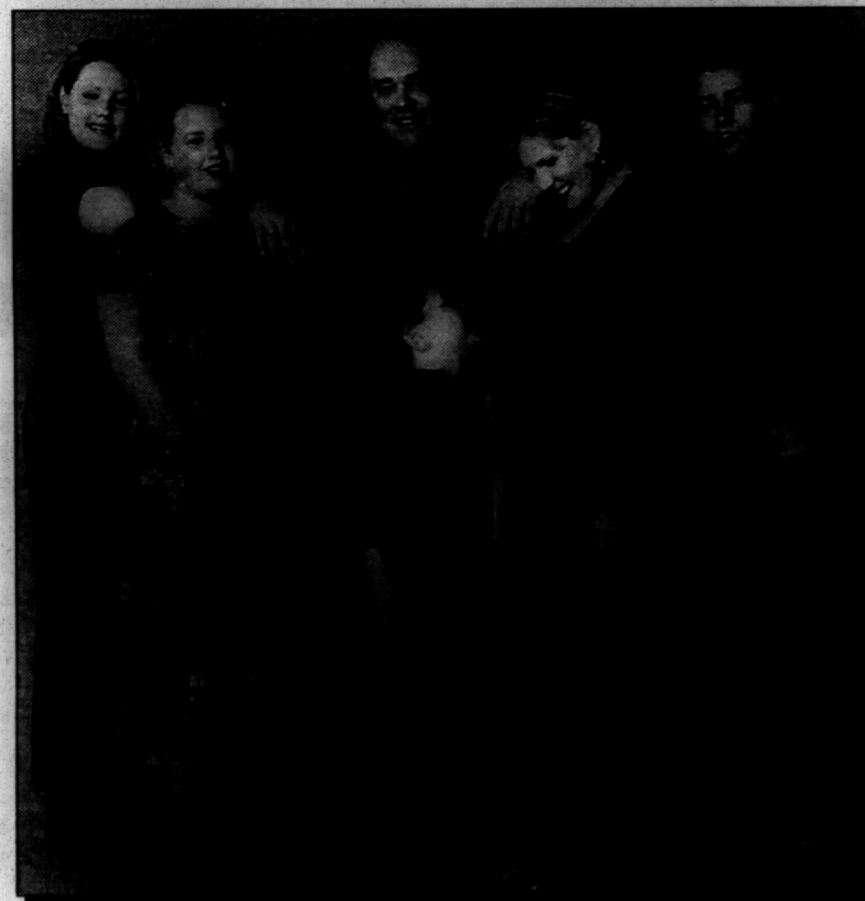
The family interaction — with each other and the audience (which is the church congregation) — is what makes the play entertaining.

"People are able to see something of themselves in one of the characters up there on stage," said New Theatre actress Lori Blalock, who has played the part of June Sanders four times.

"It's about forgiveness and all the simple things in life; it's about getting along with your family. That's the beauty and charm of it."

Blalock added, "It's about life's lessons. It's uplifting. People can relate to the family. And while there's lots of the Bible [throughout the play], it's not pushed or forced. It's dealt with honestly."

"Truly, I've never heard of any complaints."



The Sanders Family

"BUSYBODY" OR "CARING BODY"

I invite you to go with me and share in two separate Bible study worship experiences of which I was a part. The first involved a devotional time at a meeting where we were encouraged to do what the Lord has equipped us to do, and that is to care for people. The speaker, using the story of the Good Samaritan, presented a beautiful challenge to each of us not to walk by the hurting needs of those around us, but to be willing to stop, lift someone up, help them toward healing, care for people, get involved, slow down, and even stop along the busy highway of life. The message and the manner it was presented was touching.

Not long after that meeting I was involved in a different setting. A Bible teacher was expounding on both the Word and the problems with which Paul and Peter dealt in their epistles concerning "busybodies." The teacher pointed out an instance in 1 Tim. 5:13 where Paul said there were some people in the church who were "tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." Then Peter, in 1 Peter 4:15 said, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters."

The Bible teacher expounded on these verses and illustrated how devastating a busybody can be and that we, as Christians, have a responsibility to stay out of other folk's business and not meddle in the affairs in which we have no business meddling. I sat there interested and being instructed, even inspired, but upon reflecting on the two experiences, it occurred to me that it could appear as though these were contradictory teachings, yet I knew that was not so — both were right!

What is the difference between being a "Caring Body" and a "Busybody?" I think the difference can be captured in



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

T.A.A. That's right — T.A.A. Let me explain. The "T" stands for "Tell." Busybodies have got to be telling what they know about other people's business. I'm not altogether sure how this works, but it seems as though busybodies are energized by gossiping. They can hardly wait for something to come into their ears so they can get it out of their mouth. They have always got to be "in-the-know," and to be telling "what they know." They are gossipers, gossipmongers, and gossipspreaders! They just have to tell or they would POP.

On the other hand, "Caring Bodies" reach out and into people's lives to encourage, help, and bring healing. They seek to lift up, to bring about change, to bless, and yet no one may ever know about it. As the Good Samaritan left the hotel he did not stop by the television station to be interviewed so that everyone would know of his good deeds that day. With a beautiful kind of spiritual discretion, the Bible shows a man who rescues another life from the brink of disaster and then goes on his way.

The first "A" in T.A.A. stands for "Action." Caring Bodies act while Busybodies are simply driven to know all the facts about the situation. Busybodies generally know all the background, all the wrong decisions, all the people involved, all the consequences, what everybody said, and then they rehearse it over and over again. As a general rule they rarely get around to doing something redemptive, positive, and life-changing to help the situation.

Think about those two men who saw the poor guy lying on the side of the road in the parable that Jesus told. One of them even went so far as to go over and check out his condition and the landscape, but both of them went on down the road. We can only imagine that the closer they got to their destination, the more excited they got about telling folks about the horrible sight they had seen on the way. That is the kind of "body" a busybody is! They find it far easier to wag a tongue than to lift a finger.

The other "A" in T.A.A. stands for "Attitude." This factor

may be the most difficult to discern and at the same time it may be the most potent in distinguishing a "Caring Body" from a "Busybody." Busybodies come to an event, or an experience, with a critical sneer, even a condemning attitude. Busybodies are the kind of people who pass judgement long before all the facts are in.

Do you remember the young man named Richard Jewell? He was the fellow who, in the Atlanta Olympics bombing, at first appeared to be a hero then was turned into a villain. Months down the road he was cleared of any charges or connections with the event. The only problem is, in the process, his life was wrecked by the thousands of hours on TV and hundreds of thousands of words in print that pointed to him as being involved in the dastardly deed.

Caring people do not come to a need in order to pass judgement. Their only concern is how can someone be helped out of the problem. The caring person seeks to stop the bleeding, not analyze how the victim was injured. Busybodies are not bound by facts, or ethics, or morals, or even consequences of their own actions or words. They highlight the problem and have no regard for the problems they create.

No wonder God put in his Word significant instructions to all of us to steer clear of being a "Busybody" and to focus on being "Caring Bodies," who love both in deed and word in the name of Christ.

B&H secures rights to Stewart bio

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Broadman & Holman (B&H) has secured the rights to publish the authorized biography of popular pro golfer Payne Stewart, who died in a plane crash in late October.

Stewart was a member of First Church, Orlando, and his children attend the church's academy.

The book, targeted for release in June, is expected to coincide with the anniversary of the professional golfer's 1999 U.S. Open victory, said B&H president Ken Stephens. B&H is the trade book publishing division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

Stewart's widow, Tracey Stewart, also a member of First Church, Orlando, is writing the biography with the help of author Ken Abraham, a writer who has collaborated on several projects with celebrities and public figures.

AAEO records seventh straight record total in '99

TALLEDEGA, Ala. (BP) — Southern Baptists gave a record \$43.5 million to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions in 1999, reported Robert E. Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). The agency uses the funds to support more than 5,000 missionaries in the

United States and Canada.

Speaking to the executive board of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) meeting in annual session at Shocco Springs Conference Center, Reccord expressed appreciation to WMU — the agency which initiated the missions offering more than 100 years ago.

"Thank you and your thou-

sands of WMU members across the country for helping Southern Baptists give \$43,550,000 to the Annie Armstrong Offering last year," Reccord said. "This is the seventh year in a row the offering has set a new record, and we are so wonderfully thankful for what God is doing through this offering to reach people for himself."

Every dollar of the offering — received in most Southern Baptist churches in the spring of each year — directly supports the work of Southern Baptist missionaries, most of whom are jointly appointed and supported by the North American Mission Board and partner state Baptist conventions.

The offering supplies 38% of NAMB's budget with another 34% from the Southern Baptist Convention's unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program,

and the remainder from individual gifts, investments, and other income.

Acknowledging that the 1999 Offering fell short of its \$45 million goal, Reccord said, "While all of us wish there were more, we realize there will never be enough to meet the overwhelming challenges of reaching North America for Christ. Therefore, every one of us must redouble our efforts at personalizing the mission and ministry of the 5,000 missionaries supported by this offering." The national goal for the 2000 offering is \$47 million.

Reccord also reported that the mission offering was not the only record set by the agency last year. He reiterated the recent announcement that for the first time in history, the number of NAMB missionaries exceeded 5,000 in 1999 — a key goal of the denomination's 25-year growth plan called Bold Mission Thrust.

The number of missionary appointments for the year also was up, Reccord said, as were the number of missionary candidate interviews, mission volunteers, and endorsed chaplains. He said he is also anticipating that Southern Baptists started more new churches last year than any year in history, although final reports have not yet been completed.

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Sumrall, Holloway, Baker, and Anderson

Louis J. Holloway Jr. was recently ordained to the ministry at First Church, Boyle, where he has served since 1993 as director of music and youth. Pictured (from left) are W. J. Sumrall; Holloway; David Baker, chairman of deacons; and Joe Anderson, pastor.

Mississippian Brian Fitzgerald Horton, 38, died Dec. 26, 1999, of a massive heart attack in Stockbridge, Ga. He was presently serving as pastor of North Henry Church, Stockbridge. Funeral services were held at Sallis Church, Sallis, where Horton was a former pastor. A native of Clarksdale, Horton received

his education at Delta State University and New Orleans Seminary. Survivors include his wife Carol Burleson Horton; children, Tori, Stephen, and Katie Horton of Stockbridge; parents, Jerry and Nina Hubbard of Clarksdale; and brothers, Billy Horton of Rossville, Ga., Jay Hubbard of Indianola, and Jeff Hubbard of Clarksdale.

Deacons ordained at Centreville Church, Mississippi Association, on Dec. 19 were (pictured from left) Lane White, Greg Poole, and Emmette Knighton.

Members of New Hope Church, Foxworth, with perfect attendance in Sunday School were recognized in the morning service on Nov. 21. Pictured are B. B. Stringer, 44 years; Mona Stringer, two years; Jimmy Thomas, 30 years; Pud Stringer, nine years; Willie Blackwell, 16 years; Karla Ratliff, eight years; Peggy Stringer, 10 years; Bonnie Pittman, nine years; Nancy Thomas, 17 years; Donna Ratliff, 18 years; Mitch Ratliff, eight years; Chase Clark, three years; and Sherrell Magee, 18 years.



White, Poole, and Knighton



Members of New Hope Church, Foxworth

WMU hosts GA/Acteens Campus Day

GA/Acteens Campus Day, sponsored by Mississippi WMU, will be held Feb. 12 at Mississippi College from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The cost of \$7.50 per person includes basketball game, meal, program, and limited insurance. Registration deadline is Feb. 7. Send name of contact person, church, and phone number with \$7.50 to WMU, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. For more information, contact Robin Keels at (601) 292-3322.

The Mississippi College English Department's annual Sue Price Lipsey Lecture will be held on Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. in Aven Auditorium. The speaker is James H. Sims, Distinguished Professor of English and Vice President Emeritus at the University of Southern Mississippi. His topic will be "Shakespeare and the Christian Reader."

Ten students at the William Carey College School of Nursing will receive degrees during a Pinning Ceremony in the Dumas L. Smith Auditorium, Hattiesburg, Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. Graduates include Jason Bowen of Raliegh; Kristen

Brown of Columbia; Lisa Cooper of Hattiesburg; Sylvia Fisher of New Orleans, La.; Ben Lott of Bogalusa, La.; Eric McCrahey of Leakesville; Sarah McLelland of Hattiesburg; Amber Rushing of Tylertown; Marcia Shouse of Gautier; and Susan Weathers of Hattiesburg.

Mississippi College School of Business and the Office of Continuing Education announces the annual start of the innovative accelerated prerequisite program that allows students to complete prerequisites for the master of business administration (MBA) degree in an abbreviated time frame. The program is designed for

students who desire an MBA but do not have a business background or undergraduate degree or lack only a few of the required prerequisites. Individuals interested in the Accelerated MBA Program may call Ken Gilliam at (601) 925-3263 or e-mail at: continuing-ed@mc.edu

The Mississippi College (MC) Career Services Center announces its fourth annual Career Day to be held Feb. 8. Career Day 2000 will be held in the A. E. Wood Coliseum from 10 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. and is open to all MC students and alumni to meet informally with prospective employers. For

more information concerning Career Day 2000, contact the Mississippi College Career Services Center at (601) 925-3901 or e-mail at career-center@mc.edu.

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Homecoming

Grace, Philadelphia: Feb. 6; 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall, 12 noon; afternoon singing; Dennis Duvall, pastor.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

RA recognition service was held recently at Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale. Twenty-four boys, from the 1st-12th grade were recognized and were given a banquet with their families.

A Youth Rally will be held at Calvary Church, Vicksburg, from 5:30-11 p.m. on Feb. 4. A concert will be presented by Ninth Hour. For more information, call (601) 636-7501.

Celebrate Jesus 2000 Evangelistic Rally will be held at Calvary Church, Vicksburg, on Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. Special guest speaker will be Larry Harris, evangelist and member of First Church, Barton. For more information, contact the church at (601) 636-7501.

Squire Parsons will be in concert at Macedonia Church, Petal, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. For more information, contact the church at (601) 545-3110.

GAs from Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, recently visited a number of senior adults



Providence Church, Tiptersville, recently held a reception for J. E. Smith, who retired as deacon after 41 years. He was presented a plaque by the church and a picture for his home by the deacons. Pictured (from left) are Johnny Eaton, Grady Camburn, Smith, and Gene Knight, deacons; and Shane Price, pastor.

Unity Church, West, held a dedication service for its new baptistry on Nov. 20. The baptistry was dedicated to Jessie Scott Jr., former pastor who died Sept. 17, 1999, and in honor of his wife Sarah Scott. Presenting the plaque to Sarah Scott is J. D. Hudson, chairman of deacons.



Scott and Hudson

The Desires of a Woman's Heart, a woman's conference, will be held at First Church, Kosciusko, on Feb. 19. The times are: registration, 8-9 a.m.; introduction, music, and inspirational message, 9-10:30 a.m.; inspirational message, 10:45-11:45 a.m.; inspirational message and closing remarks, 12:45-2:30 p.m. Registration fee of \$15 per person includes registration, lunch, materials, and child care. The speaker will be Jan Silvius of Chattanooga, Tenn. The singer will be Karen Sudduth of Tupelo and an adjunct instructor at Northeast Junior College. For more information, call Marilyn Robertson at (662) 289-6343.



WMU of Providence Church, Tiptersville, recently sponsored a mission awareness day. Margaret Fairburn, former missionary, was the speaker. Pictured (from left) are Dorothy Edwards, WMU director; Mollye Eaton and Bailey Knight, GAs; Fairburn; Allison Horton, GA; and Betty Harrison, GA leader.

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RAs of Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

in their community and church to sing Christmas carols. Leaders (pictured) are Mildred Brown, director; Kim Bussen; Carmon Thompson; and Cheryl Jones.



GAs of Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale



Drawn Together from Mississippi State University - Baptist Student Union (MSU-BSU) are available to do youth activities, banquets, retreats, and worship services. The students (from left) are Robert Sims, Sarah McConnell, Kathryn Hill, Elizabeth Blake, and Ryan Lindsay. For more information, contact MSU-BSU, P.O. Box BU, Mississippi State, MS 39762 or call (662) 323-5761.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - Seeking part-time minister of music. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 347, Coldwater, MS 38618. Attention: Search Committee.

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Mississippians appointed as missionaries

RICHMOND, Va. — Mississippians Dan and Jane Whatley Robertson have joined the more than 4,800 Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) workers sharing Christ in 124 countries and among 336 ethnic people groups.



D. Robertson



J. Robertson

The Robertsons were among 38 people appointed by the International Mission Board Jan. 10 during a service at Lakeview Church in Auburn, Ala.

The Robertsons will live and work in Honduras as church planters. They will focus their ministry on the factory workers in San Pedro Sula.

For 27 years, Dan has served as the pastor of six churches in Mississippi. He is currently the pastor of First Church in Natchez. For 12 years,

Jane has been a public school teacher. Since August, she has taught at Trinity Episcopal Day School in Natchez.

Other churches influential to their spiritual growth are Macedonia Church in Myrtle; West Heights Church in Pontotoc; and Longview Church in Longview.

Dan was born in New

Albany. He received the bachelor of science degree from Mississippi State University in Starkville and the master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary.

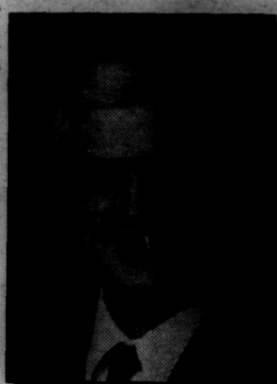
Jane was born in Starkville to Lamar and Elizabeth Whatley. Her commitment to international missions happened over a period of time through the influence of her Christian parents and her mission-minded church.

When she was 16, Jane met her husband-to-be, a man who wanted to preach.

The Robertsons have two adult children: Jason and Danielle.

John (Ed) and Deborah Sansing Royals joined the Robertsons in being appointed new missionaries.

The Royalses will live in Brazil where he will devise a strategy to develop a computer network to help evangelize Eastern South America through e-mail. The couple will also use their counseling skills in marriage and family enrichment to reach out to their co-workers and the community.



J. Royals



D. Royals

For 27 years, Ed worked for IBM in White House, Tenn., most recently as a systems engineer. They are members of White House First Church.

Other churches influential to their spiritual growth are Boca Glades Church in Boca Raton, Fla., and Grace Church in Philadelphia.

Ed was born in Newton, to Mary and the late Arthur Royals II. He accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior when he was 9. While on a youth retreat in high school, he was confronted with the fact that Jesus saved him for a purpose. From that moment on, Ed dedicated his life to serving Jesus Christ.

After high school, Ed became certified in radio/TV repair from Holmes Community College in Goodman. He met his wife during his last year of school.

Deborah was born in Carrollton to Myrtice and the late John Clarke Sansing. For years, Deborah's father was a Southern Baptist pastor in Mississippi.

The Royalses have two adult children.

Herbert (Harris) and Virginia (Jenny) McLemore Cook, a former member of the music staff at First Church, Jackson, were also appointed as new missionaries by IMB.

The Cooks were among 38 people appointed by the IMB Jan. 10 during a service at Lakeview Church in Auburn, Ala.

The Cooks will coordinate the low-income evangelism team in Venezuela. Their focus will be on the more than five million urban poor living in Caracas.

Harris currently ministers in apartment complexes and mobile home communities for the Bessemer (Ala.) Baptist Association. Jenny also works in her husband's ministry and is a teacher at Sumiton (Ala.) Christian School.

The Cooks are members of Bessemer Community Church in Jasper, Ala.

He received the bachelor of arts degree from Samford University in Birmingham; a master of divinity from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and a doctorate of ministry from New Orleans Seminary.

Jenny was born in Montgomery, Ala., to Eugene and Jean McLemore. She dedicated her life to full-time Christian music ministry at age 15. She received the bachelor of music education and the master of music education from Samford University in Birmingham.

Vols needed for campaigns in Far East

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — At least 1,300 Southern Baptist volunteers are needed to help spark spiritual revival through two nationwide evangelistic campaigns planned in Japan and South Korea later this year.

Baptist leaders in Japan are seeking 300 volunteers to help with crusades in at least 30 key churches in that country June 21-July 3. Baptists in South Korea are calling for 1,000 volunteers to join them in leading revivals in about 100 churches Nov. 1-14.

Trip costs are \$2,875 for Japan and \$2,850 for South Korea. Pastors and laypeople of all ages are needed for both projects. Jackson said commitments from volunteers are needed as soon as possible but that the trips won't close out until a month before the departure dates.

For more information or to sign up for either project, contact W.H. "Dub" Jackson by phone at (915) 698-8480; fax, (915) 698-4000; or e-mail, whdubjackson@compuserve.com. His mailing address is 2426 Spyglass Hill Court, Abilene, TX 79606.

NAMB appoints Taylor

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) has appointed April Taylor to serve through the US/C-2 program in New Orleans.



Taylor

She is serving at the Baptist Friendship House as a church and community ministries missionary. The US/C-2 program allows college

graduates under the age of 30 to serve for two years in North American missions.

Taylor is a graduate of Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain. In 1995, she served as a summer missionary with the Mississippi Baptist Student Union. She has also served as a cabin leader at Camp Garaywa in Clinton, the state's GA campground. Taylor is a native of Pontotoc, where her parents, Harry and Donna Patterson, continue to live.

She is a member of First Church, Pontotoc.

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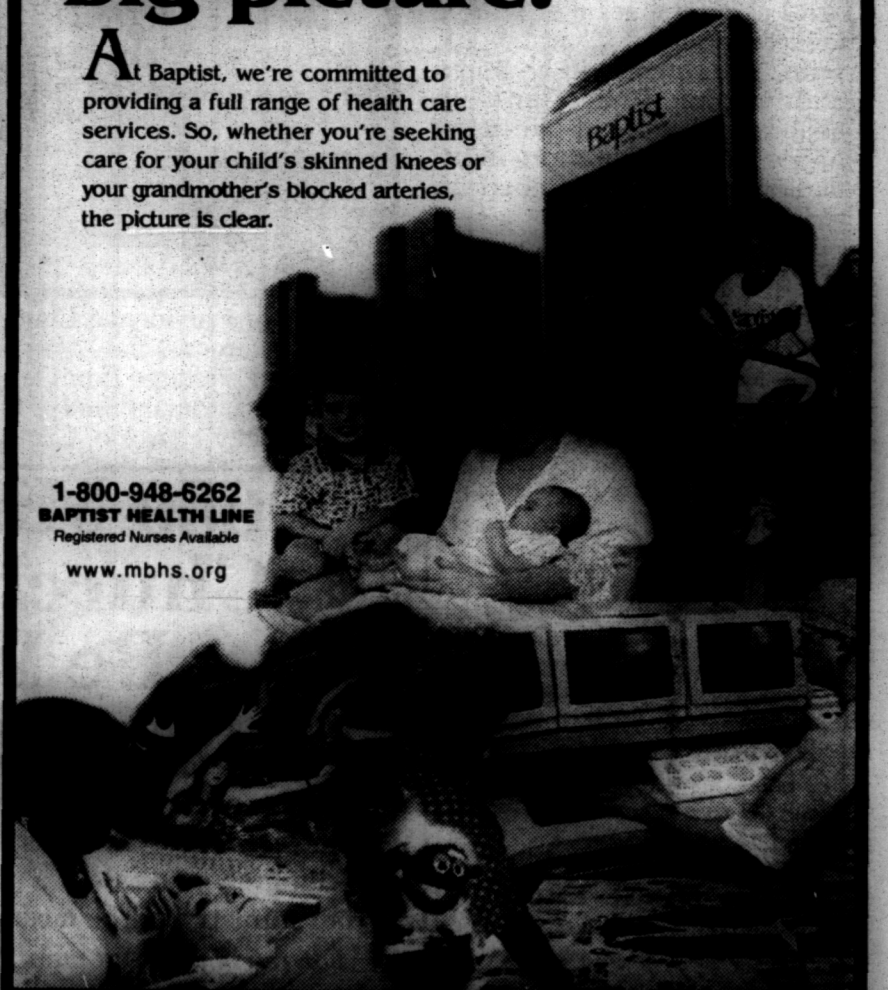
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THANKS FOR AUTO

Editor:

We wanted to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the Macedonian Call Foundation for the car that we were able to lease for a nominal fee during a recent visit to Mississippi. It was such a blessing to have a dependable and affordable car to use during our month's visit.

We are grateful to the people who have contributed vehicles as well as funds to this ministry, for it met a real need in our lives. We are also appreciative of Tom Hearon of Ridgeland, the founder of Macedonian Call. He renders a great service to missionaries as he maintains the cars to missionary families.

We are thankful to Mississippi Baptists for the many ways in which they support and encourage missionaries, and we are especially thankful that people have been led to express that support through their gifts to the Macedonian Call Foundation.

Sincerely,
Clifton and Cathy Curtis
IMB missionaries, B. Faso

REASON FOR CLAUSE

Editor:

Concerning Brother McVey's Letter in the January 20 issue of The Baptist Record there is a real good reason why the "church property revert" clause is in those deeds.

Recently in California a

charismatic denomination decided to start a church in a small mountain town. The property values were too high for them to build their own church so they decided to practice some "heavenly deception" and sent some of their membership into the local Southern Baptist Church until they had doubled the congregation and qualified for membership.

At the next business meeting they tried to vote the building over to their denomination. The pastor pulled the charter and showed them the "revert" clause and ended their property grab.

Brother McVey, despite what you might think about that clause, it serves a worthy purpose. It is not designed to limit your church or set up a ruling council within your local association.

Ed Williamson
Canon City, Colorado

INVITE SMALL CHURCHES

Editor:

I have been a pastor in Mississippi since 1955, and I have yet to see or hear of a country pastor being invited to have a major part in the state convention program.

It is always "Dr." somebody who does not represent us. In a fair estimate of the churches in Mississippi I would daresay that over two-thirds of the churches are small rural churches like ours.

Wouldn't it be fair to say that at least every other year one in

our midst should be represented? The convention is continually asking us to increase our Cooperative Program gifts, and yet we are never recognized.

We are tired of the same old two and four every year. All of us are a vital part of the Southern Baptist body. Southern Baptists were started as a group of small rural churches like ours.

Thank you for having a listening ear to a long felt grievance among our smaller churches.

Jim Jeffreys, pastor
Poplar Springs Church
Vardaman

SCHOLARSHIP SET

Editor:

On November 20, 1999 J.M. Wood was honored with a Retirement Celebration at the Ramada Inn Coliseum in Jackson. Friends and family traveled from surrounding states to give tribute to this dear man and his service to our Lord.

He has served as a minister of music in Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. For the past 27 years he has served in Mississippi. He has been a member of the Singing Churchmen of Mississippi. He is considered by many to have set the standard for music ministers. His passion for excellence and his heart for ministry are like no other.

A music scholarship was established in his name through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. The scholarship is entitled the "J.M. Wood Church Music Scholarship." This scholarship is to be awarded to any student attending a Southern Baptist Seminary or Mississippi Baptist College that exemplifies the standards set fourth in Mr. Wood's life and ministry. It is our desire to help a student desiring to follow the Lord's call in this area so that our God will be glorified.

Anyone desiring to make a contribution to the scholarship fund can do so by sending their contribution to the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, Mississippi 39205. Please

be sure to indicate on the check that it is for this scholarship.

If you have any questions you can contact that office or First Church, Brandon. We know that J.M. has touched many lives in this state and in neighboring states and we want to extend this opportunity to those whose lives have been impacted by him forever to the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rhonda Armstrong
Brandon

THANKS FOR EDITORIAL

Editor:

Thanks for the editorial of January 13 (The cretins among us)! I was beginning to wonder if anyone else felt that way. The time to get busy is far past and it looks like we will lose the battle here — but the war has already been won and the victory assured, so let's at least go down swinging!

Robert M. Moore, Sr., pastor
Morgan City Church
Morgan City

EYE SPECIALIST NEEDED

Editor:

Perhaps some of your readers will feel led by God to join hands with us to meet a need in Christ's name. Calvary Chapel of Parchman, a Southern Baptist church serving the staff of Mississippi State Penitentiary, has been involved since 1993 in a missions partnership with northeastern Mexico. We have done preaching, medical-dental evangelism, construction, Vacation Bible School, and puppet ministry.

Hundreds of people have given their lives to Christ over the years, but we have been unable to meet one need. The people desperately cry out for an optometrist. Our next medical-dental-evangelism team leaves in July. Is there a Christian optometrist or ophthalmologist anywhere who would answer the call of God and the cry of the people to come and help them?

We would give praise to God if someone would be willing to meet this need in the Name of Christ.

Joe Young, pastor
Calvary Chapel of Parchman
Charleston



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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LIFE AND WORK

Reasons to be faithful

Revelation 1:1-8, 12-18

By Michael Jones

The book of Revelation is one many people fear reading because it can be hard to understand. It would be a mistake, though, to simply not read the book. Revelation offers many insights to us as Christians and has a word for our churches. The lesson for this week comes from the first chapter of Revelation. It is a call by God for us to be faithful.

The Lord calls us to faithfulness (vv. 1-3). In this first chapter John reveals the source, subject, and reason for writing the book. The source is Jesus Christ,

the subject is the revelation of Jesus, and the reason is because the time is near.

The call to be faithful comes in verse three of this passage. It is in the form of a beatitude, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near." God has revealed his word to us and calls all those who hear it to action. The action we are called to is to be faithful. What does it mean to be faithful? Simply what verse three says, to keep or obey the



Jones

truths God has revealed through his word and live it. Not just say it or preach it, but live it. How are we to live it?

The Lord redeems us (vv. 4-6). One way we are to live it is by being his representation to others. The Lord has brought redemption to us and we are to be faithful by representing him to others.

Verses five and six read: "To him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to his God and Father." This is redemption, saving us from our sins by shedding his own blood and then presenting us before the Father as kings and priests. As faithful ones who have been redeemed by Christ, we are to be his witness in the world so

that others may come to know this redemption.

The Lord is coming again (vv. 7-8). Another way we are to live it, is to live our life with the confidence that Christ will one day make his return. John clearly announces in verse seven that Christ will be coming back "in the clouds" and "every eye will see him."

Our call is to live in the confidence that Christ is returning. It is a victory for those who know him and have been faithful, but for those who have ignored him that day will be a day of distress. This brings an added dimension to our faithful living. We are not to be comfortable in our victory knowing the Lord will return, instead we are to be urgently telling others this truth, so they will know and have the opportunity to accept him.

The Lord is worthy (vv. 12-

18). In these verses John paints a picture using symbolic imagery. He paints a picture of Christ in all his majesty. It is this majesty which reveals another way we are to live the faithful life. That is, as faithful servants, we are to recognize that we serve a majestic God, one who is exalted, one who is alive and not dead. He's the one in whom peace and hope can be found. It is because of this he is worthy to be praised.

In this first chapter John is addressing the "seven churches which are in Asia." It is a call for our churches to be faithful. How can our churches be faithful? It begins with the individuals which make up the church. It begins with us. God is calling us to be faithful. How will you answer that call?

Jones is associate pastor/youth minister at Monticello Church, Monticello.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Developing confidence

1 John 5:13-21

By Carl M. White

Someone once said that confidence is that quiet feeling of assurance you have just before you fall flat on your face. In reality, confidence is one of the blessings of the Christian life that comes through the study of God's Word. God's desire for us is that we have confidence, and this confidence comes from certain truths that we can know.

Assurance of eternal life. Verse 13 of today's lesson is the thesis statement of 1 John. He wrote this letter so the readers might gain the assurance of eternal life.

It was, first of all, written to believers. A Christian college professor was lecturing once on

the assurances found in the Bible. An unbelieving student stood up and declared that he had read the Bible from cover to cover and found no such assurances. To this the professor replied, "Young man, the Bible is God's love letter to his children. That's what you get for reading somebody else's mail."

Throughout 1 John, the apostle outlines the way a child of God should live. This includes: the renunciation of sin; obedience to the love command; rejection of worldliness; and the maintenance of faith. These are the kinds of things, John says, that give evidence of salvation and bring assurance of eternal life.



White

Assurance of prayer (vv. 15-17). The second assurance is related to prayer. Verse 15 is a special promise, that our Father in heaven hears our prayers, and responds to our prayers.

Taken out of context, this text could be used to support the "name it, claim it" theology that is found in some circles today. However, the broader context of scripture makes clear that a close relationship with God is not a blank check for anything we desire. Even the best prayers by the best people sometimes are answered "no!" For example, consider Jesus' heart-felt request in the Garden of Gethsemane. His request was outside of the will of the Father, and the answer was no.

John takes a bit of a diversion in verse 16 and 17, commenting about a sin unto death and a sin not unto death. Some commentators interpret this in

light of teachings found in Jewish literature about sins that lead to physical death. This means a sin that is detected or revealed by a fatal illness. Aids could be an example.

Other interpreters say this passage is about spiritual death, not physical death. Thus, John is warning believers about two things. First, even believers still sin, but there is hope for the believer in sin, thus they should pray for one another. Second, unbelievers have committed the unpardonable sin. He does not recommend prayer for them. This is a difficult passage that requires careful interpretation.

Assurance of protection. Verse 18 is the first of three verses that begin with the statement "we know." We can know with confidence that God will protect his children from the evil one. Surely the statement "no one who is born of God sins," is in reference to the earlier discussion about a sin lead-

ing to death. Believers can still sin, but not the unpardonable sin.

Assurance of position (v. 19). Not only are we assured of God protection, we are assured of our position with God. John says we are "of" God, meaning that in Christ we partake in the revelation of God. Our position is secure with God, even while the rest of the world lies under the influence of the evil one.

Assurance of understanding (vv. 20-21). Our relationship with God through Christ gives us an understanding that cannot be gained through education or books. This understanding is all tied up in the simple truth that God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself. Because of this truth, John ends with a warning: guard yourself from idols.

Don't let your confidence in Christ cause you to drop your guard.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Guidance of the Word

Matthew 21:1-13

By Lynn Jones

A boy asked the pilot of a large jetliner, "How do you fly that airplane in the dark? How do you know where to go?" With a twinkle in his eye, the pilot explained, "Well, there is a light on the left wing, a light on the right wing, and a light on the tail. What I try to do is keep the plane between those lights."

One of the major questions that we face in life is how to find our way in a dark world. What can give us a sense of direction? What can provide us guidance? One of our most dependable guidance systems is the Word of God. We see that illustrated in this passage where the Word of God is

quoted three different times.

Guidance in prophecy (vv. 1-7). This incident, which occurred on Sunday, marked the beginning of the final week of Jesus' life. Usually called the "triumphal entry," the incident began with Jesus sending two of his disciples to get donkeys.

He told these disciples that they would find a donkey with its colt tied. The disciples were to untie the donkeys and bring them to Jesus. Jesus said that if any one asked them about their getting the donkeys they were to say, "The Lord hath need of them."

In making detailed plans for his entrance into Jerusalem,



Jones

Jesus showed his intention to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 which prophesied that the Messiah would come riding upon the colt of a donkey. By doing this, Jesus wanted to help the people see that he was the Messiah.

When the disciples did as Jesus commanded, they found the donkeys and brought them to Jesus. The ancient words of prophecy were literally fulfilled when they obeyed Jesus' instructions.

When I was growing up, my mother faithfully read, "Hints from Heloise." This column offered hints about how to do things more efficiently around the house. Whenever I saw nylon netting somewhere in the house, I knew that Mom had been reading "Hints from Heloise" again. The Bible is not a book of hints about how to

live life. It is a book of pointed instructions and life-changing insights. We need to trust and to obey the Word of God.

Guidance in praise (vv. 8-11). As Jesus came riding the donkey into Jerusalem, a great crowd went before him preparing the way. They "paved" the road with their cloaks and with tree branches. The crowds also shouted their praise to Jesus as he passed by. The words that they shouted came from Psalm 118:26. They were part of the great praise that was sung to God at Passover season.

Offering praise to God is one of our duties and privileges. Many of our songs have Scripture as part of the lyrics. We can sing those songs as well as read passages of praise from the Bible. These can guide us in our praise of God.

Guidance in lifestyles (vv. 12-13). Soon the excitement of the triumphal entry was over. On the next day, Jesus and his

disciples went to the temple in Jerusalem. When they toured the temple area, they saw the merchants who had set up shop in the temple courtyard. Here they sold animals and exchanged coins that could be used in temple worship. In every exchange and sale, they made an excessive profit.

Jesus used Scripture to condemn them. He used Isaiah 56:7 to declare that God wanted his house to be called "the house of prayer." He used Jeremiah 7:11 to declare that the temple had become "a den of thieves." God's Word corrects our lifestyles and calls us to deeper dedication.

It's been said that the problem with most books is that the covers are too far apart. Not so with the Bible. It is a sacred book, and on every page we can find the guidance that we need for life.

Jones is pastor of First Church, Booneville.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Members of Holcomb Baptist Church donated two calves to the young people of Farrow Manor campus. They also provided the initial feed and medical necessities for the animals' upkeep. The purpose of the donation was for the young people on campus to raise the calves and show them at market. All proceeds will be put in a fund to start another similar project.

Southwestern conducts first-ever 'Roll Call'

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — A president, a dean, and students have been called martyrs. Some after a lifetime of ministry. Some in the midst of it. Some only at the beginning. One hundred fifty-three in all. Each for a moment remembered by family, friends, colleagues, and the generation of

Christian men and women who have been called to stand in the gap.

Honoring those who have entered the great cloud of witnesses, Southwestern Seminary held its first-ever "Roll Call," a commemoration service for alumni and students of the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary who died last year.

Those who were honored at the Jan. 21 service represented ministry that spanned seven decades and reached around the world. The names of all 153 were read by the deans of each school. After each dean completed the list for his school, the seminary's bell tolled seven times.

The names included the three who were murdered at Wedgwood Church Sept. 15, Shawn C. Brown, Sydney R. Browning, and Kimberly S. Jones. The names also included Robert E. Naylor, president emeritus, and Thomas D. Lea, dean of the school of theology.

Prior to the reading of the names, Lea's widow, Beverly, lit a remembrance candle on the stage in Truett Auditorium.

Acknowledging that most of the names were unfamiliar to the people who attended the service, Southwestern President Kenneth S. Hemphill asked, "Why do they draw us?"

"I suppose it's because we remember them and we are encouraged," he said.

Hemphill spoke briefly on Hebrews 12:1-3, noting the roll call of faith in the previous chapter that included well-known people of faith and "the lesser-

knowns" — unnamed prophets, women "who receive back their dead by resurrection" and victims of torture, persecution, and harassment.

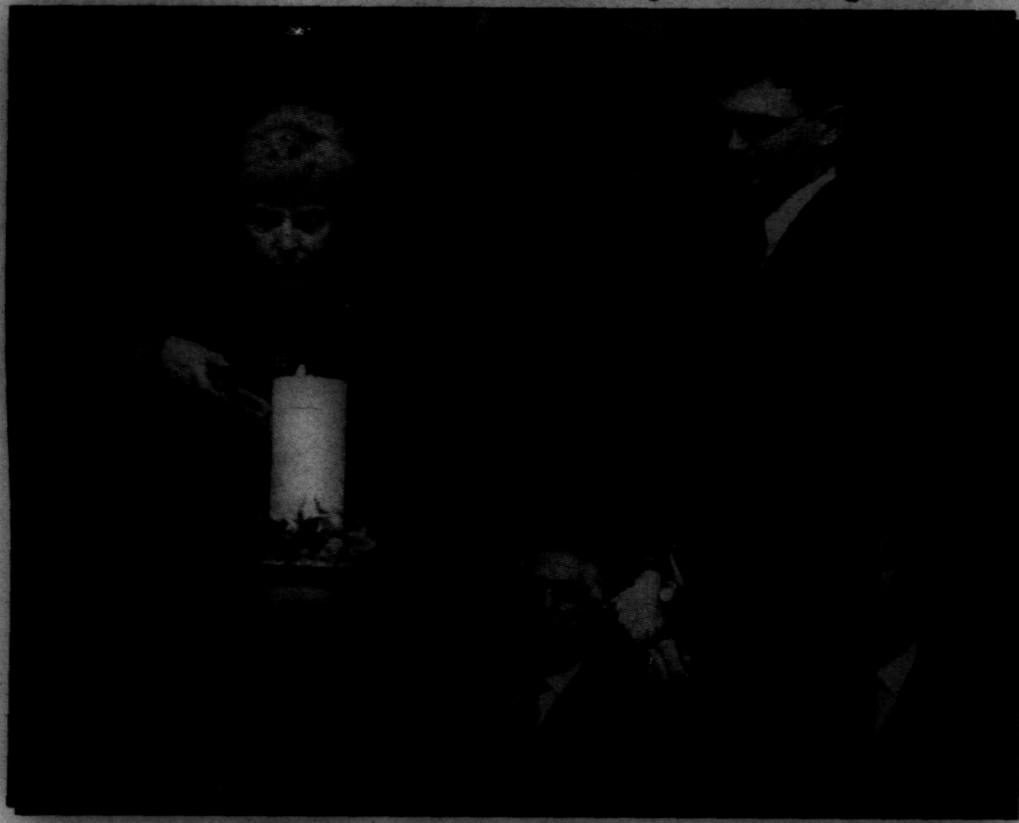
"You might wonder why at this point in biblical revelation the author would include such a list," Hemphill said. "There are those who suspect that the author knew that the New Testament church would soon be facing its own persecution and wanted to encourage and to raise up a new generation of heroes."

"Where are the heroes of today? Where are those who will stand in the gap, stand for righteousness in a society that has less room for it, stand for truth when pluralism and syncretism are the words of today?" Hemphill challenged.

Noting the use of a stadium scene in Hebrews 12, Hemphill said the witnesses in the stands are not mere spectators, but former participants "who ran well and did well in their own day" and are now cheering on the participants of today.

"Why did we come to remember?" Hemphill asked again. "Not only to pay our respects to those who have gone before but also to be reminded that the task is now ours, the baton has been passed."

Hemphill reminded the faculty, staff and students that the passage directs Christians to "lay aside encumbrances," to be "ruthless" in dealing with one's own "besetting sin," to run with endurance, and to focus on Jesus.



LIGHTING A MEMORY — Beverly Lea (left), widow of Tommy Lea, dean of the School of Theology, lights a commemorative candle during a memorial service Friday, Jan. 21 at Southwestern Seminary honoring Southwestern alumni who died in the past year. Jay Collier, president of the Theological Fellowship, looks on. Lea died July 2, 1999, after a four-and-one-half-year battle with cancer. During the service, the names of those who died were read by the deans of the three schools of the seminary. (BP photo by Bryan Murley)

U.S. continuing shift from traditional families

CHICAGO (ABP) — The American family is moving away from the traditional model of a stay-at-home mother and working father with children, according to a recent survey.

Dual-income and single-parent families are replacing the "Ozzie-and-Harriet family," said Tom Smith, author of "The Emerging 21st Century American Family," a report by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Women in the work place, redefinition of the roles of husbands and wives, smaller families and changing mores about marriage and sex are "fundamental changes" affecting American families, Smith said.

"Both family structure and family values have been changing and as a result of these changes, the American family is a much-altered institution," Smith said.

Among the most profound changes taking place in the last generation are the increased role of women in the work place and redefinition of gender roles by married couples, the study said.

"Women have greatly increased their participation in the paid labor force outside the home," the study said. In 1960, 42% of women ages 25-64 worked outside the home. That percentage grew to 49% in 1970, 59% in 1980, 69% in 1990 and 71% in 1995.

Women are bringing in a greater share of the family's income. By 1994, women had higher income than their husbands in 22% of dual-job families.

That has contributed to a change in gender roles.

"Among the most fundamental changes affecting American society over the last generation has been the redefinition of the roles of men and women and husbands and wives," the study said.

While gender roles are becoming less traditional, Smith said, stay-at-home fathers in "Mr. Mom" households are still "a rarity."

The acceptance of women in politics has increased substantially over the last 25 years. In 1972, 74% of the population

said they would vote a woman into presidency and in 1998, 94% accepted female candidates, according to the report.

Declining marriage and childbirth rates will mean fewer households will contain children in the future, Smith predicted.

Bibliocipher

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TMU FNLHMQ NL
AJWWJU WSEG UKANIL;
EGH EZZ WSJ WSNGR
WSEW QEV AJ HJLNUJH
EUJ GMW WM AJ
DMQOEUIH WM NW.

OUMPJUAL JNRSW: JZJPJC

Clue: A = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Third John Eleven.



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LifeAnswers

After five years of marriage, I'm convinced I don't love my wife and never did. How do I get out of this mess?

You can't get out of this mess, according to the Bible. You made a vow before God. She may not be the woman you thought she was, but unless she leaves or commits adultery there is no scriptural way you can leave her. If your wife is not a Christian and she chooses to leave, then she can make that choice — but as a Christian you are to love her as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. People are leaving marriages for the reason you cite, but that does not make it right. Not everyone agrees with this position, but the Bible clearly states that just because a person does not love his or her spouse is no reason to seek a divorce (Matt 5:32).

You and your wife should seek Christian counseling, and you should find some Christian men to pray with you. Read some of the excellent books on this subject available at Christian bookstores. Look for the qualities in your wife that you appreciate and this will help stop the irritants from getting under your skin. Fight the good fight; it's all about finishing strong, not what feels good at the moment.

My wife's job is her lover. I endure many lonely nights because she's always working. How can I convince her to give me a little of her attention?

First, don't consider yourself in competition with her job. Praise her for the good work she is doing, but let her also see what she is missing when she is not with you. Let

her know that you want her attention and try to put things on her calendar that include both of you. Look for ways to let her know how special she is to you. For some reason, she is finding her self-worth in her job, creating a dynamic tension that will provide an opportunity for her to be pulled between the marriage and her job. She may have lost her desire to be with you. Think of the times the two of you made your marriage the main priority. Replay those instances and then look for ways to recreate them. Realize that this will not happen after one or two efforts, but will need to be done for several months. Pray for insight, and listen carefully to your wife for ways to pray for her and to come alongside her in her struggles. Be her encourager and support her in this difficult time.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.